

UN Security Council Adopts Revised Sanctions on North Korea

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Sanctions don't solve problems. They create greater ones. Officials in targeted countries are minimally affected at most, ordinary people bearing the brunt of what's imposed.

That's America's intention. Make them suffer enough to oppose their governments, a failed tactic every time, yet used repeatedly.

When actions by one or groups of nations, like Security Council members, impose harshness on targeted countries, their people most often look to their government for help. Where else can they turn?

During years of genocidal sanctions on Iraq, their people looked to Saddam Hussein for whatever help he could provide. No rebellion occurred. The same holds for North Korea.

Punitive sanctions accomplish nothing but pain and suffering for ordinary people. They achieve nothing else. They don't change policies of targeted nations. They don't get citizens to rebel against their governments.

In Pyongyang's case, its leadership is increasingly determined to pursue its nuclear and ballistic missile programs as deterrents against feared US aggression.

Without them, the country is vulnerable to attack. Having them gives aggressors like America pause about striking a nation able to hit back hard, including with nuclear weapons – thousands of US forces in South Korea and Japan in harm's way if war erupts.

Given the counterproductiveness of sanctions, why do China and Russia usually support them on nations like the DPRK – especially when rhetorically they express opposition, calling them counterproductive.

Their willingness to compromise with Washington to get along is wrongheaded when doing the wrong things. Beijing and Moscow should have vetoed Washington's draft resolution, even in softer revised form – because it does nothing to resolve contentious issues. Just the opposite is achieved.

On Monday, Security Council sanctions were imposed on the DPRK for the 9th time since 2006, their imposition encouraging, not curtailing, its nuclear and ballistic missile programs.

Changes from the original US draft dropped the total ban on oil sales to the DPRK. Instead oil imports are capped at around 30% below current levels. Gasoline, diesel, heavy fuel oil and other refined fuel products are capped well below current levels.

Imports of natural gas and condensates are prohibited. So are purchases of North Korean textiles. Exports of its coal, iron, iron ore, lead and seafood were banned earlier.

The status of North Korean guest workers abroad is uncertain. Nations employing them no longer need renewing their contracts – except when involved in humanitarian-related activities.

Vessels suspected of carrying banned North Korean products can be interdicted and inspected in international waters. Pyongyang won't permit these hostile actions. Others foreign flag ships can refuse to allow them.

The original draft's travel ban and asset freeze on Kim Jong-un were dropped. Major Chinese banks indicated they'll no longer open accounts for North Korean individuals or companies. New deposits won't be accepted. Existing accounts may be closed.

Around 90% of North Korean exports are now banned. Russia and China insist SC members consider adopting its double-freeze proposal – requiring a halt in provocative US, South Korean, Japanese military exercises in return for Pyongyang suspending its nuclear and ballistic missile testing. If voted on, a US veto is certain.

Newly imposed sanctions will increase economic harshness on the DPRK – heightening regional tensions, not easing them.

While acknowledging that sanctions are counterproductive, Russia and China on Monday supported what they should have vetoed.

At the end of the day, North Korea remains firmly committed to continue developing its nuclear and ballistic missile programs – newly imposed sanctions and earlier ones doing nothing to suspend these programs.

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